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2 **CLAIMS:**

3 1. A processor-readable medium having processor-executable
4 instructions that, when executed by a processor, performs a method comprising:

5 receiving a unicast acquisition media-stream transmission, which
6 corresponds to a target multicast media-stream transmission;

7 decoding the content of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission;

8 switching reception from the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission
9 to the target multicast media-stream transmission.

10
11 2. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the method further
12 comprises:

13 receiving an indication to change to a new channel, the new channel being
14 the target multicast media-stream transmission;

15 requesting the target multicast media-stream transmission, wherein the
16 transmission is representative of the new channel.

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18 3. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the method further
19 comprises:

20 receiving an indication to change to a new channel, the new channel being
21 represented by the target multicast media-stream transmission and the unicast
22 acquisition media-stream;

23 requesting the unicast acquisition media-stream which corresponds to the
24 target multicast media-stream transmission;

1 4. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the method further
2 comprises presenting the decoded content of the unicast acquisition media-stream
3 transmission.

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5 5. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the method further
6 comprises decoding and presenting the decoded content of the target multicast
7 media-stream transmission after the switching.

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9 6. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the method further
10 comprises requesting cessation of transmission of the unicast acquisition media-
11 stream transmission.

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13 7. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein frame properties of the
14 unicast acquisition media-stream transmission match those of the target multicast
15 media-stream transmission.

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17 8. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein frame properties of the
18 unicast acquisition media-stream transmission do not match those of the target
19 multicast media-stream transmission.

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21 9. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the frames of the unicast
22 acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that
23 used by the target multicast media-stream transmission.

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10. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the switching occurs before the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target multicast media-stream transmission.

11. A medium as recited in claim 1, wherein the switching occurs during or close to the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target multicast media-stream transmission.

12. A computing device comprising:
a media-stream presentation device;
a medium as recited in claim 1.

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13. A processor-readable medium having processor-executable instructions that, when executed by a processor, performs a method comprising:

- receiving a low bit-rate unicast acquisition media-stream transmission, which corresponds to a target normal bit-rate multicast media-stream transmission;
- decoding the content of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission;
- receiving a normal bit-rat unicast intermediate media-stream transmission, which corresponds to a target multicast media-stream transmission;
- switching reception from the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission to the unicast intermediate media-stream transmission;
- decoding the content of the unicast intermediate media-stream transmission;
- switching reception from the unicast intermediate media-stream transmission to the target multicast media-stream transmission.

14. A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further comprises:

- receiving an indication to change to a new channel, the new channel being the target multicast media-stream transmission;
- requesting the target multicast media-stream transmission, wherein the transmission is representative of the new channel.

1 **15.** A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further
2 comprises presenting the decoded content of the unicast acquisition media-stream
3 transmission.

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5 **16.** A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further
6 comprises presenting the decoded content of the intermediate media-stream
7 transmission.

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9 **17.** A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further
10 comprises presenting the decoded content of the intermediate media-stream
11 transmission after the switching from the unicast acquisition media-stream
12 transmission.

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14 **18.** A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further
15 comprises decoding and presenting the content of the target multicast media-
16 stream transmission after the switching from the intermediate media-stream
17 transmission.

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19 **19.** A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the method further
20 comprises requesting cessation of transmission of the unicast acquisition media-
21 stream transmission.

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20. A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein frame properties of the intermediate media-stream transmission match those of the target multicast media-stream transmission.

21. A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein frame properties of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission do not match those of the target multicast media-stream transmission.

22. A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the frames of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that used by the intermediate media-stream transmission.

23. A medium as recited in claim 13, wherein the frames of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that used by the target multicast media-stream transmission.

24. A computing device comprising:
a media-stream presentation device;
a medium as recited in claim 13.

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25. A processor-readable medium having processor-executable instructions that, when executed by a processor, performs a method comprising:
requesting a target multicast media-stream transmission;
receiving a unicast acquisition media-stream transmission, where the content of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission corresponds to that of the target multicast media-stream transmission;
decoding and presenting the content of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission;
switching reception from the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission to the target multicast media-stream transmission.

26. A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the method further comprises decoding and presenting the content of the target multicast media-stream transmission after the switching.

27. A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the method further comprises requesting cessation of transmission of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission.

28. A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein frame properties of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission match those of the target multicast media-stream transmission.

1 **29.** A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein frame properties of the
2 unicast acquisition media-stream transmission do not match those of the target
3 multicast media-stream transmission.

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5 **30.** A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the frames of the unicast
6 acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that
7 used by the target multicast media-stream transmission.

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9 **31.** A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the switching occurs
10 before the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target multicast media-
11 stream transmission.

12
13 **32.** A medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the switching occurs
14 during or close to the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target
15 multicast media-stream transmission.

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17 **33.** A computing device comprising:
18 a media-stream presentation device;
19 a medium as recited in claim 25.

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34. A method facilitating fast channel-change, the method comprising:
requesting a target multicast media-stream transmission;
receiving a unicast acquisition media-stream transmission, where the
content of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission corresponds to that of
the target multicast media-stream transmission;
decoding and presenting the content of the unicast acquisition media-stream
transmission;
switching reception from the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission
to the target multicast media-stream transmission.

35. A method as recited in claim 34 further comprising decoding and
presenting the decoded content of the target multicast media-stream transmission
after the switching.

36. A method as recited in claim 34 further comprising requesting
cessation of transmission of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission.

37. A method as recited in claim 34, wherein frame properties of the
unicast acquisition media-stream transmission match those of the target multicast
media-stream transmission.

1 **38.** A method as recited in claim 34, wherein frame properties of the
2 unicast acquisition media-stream transmission do not match those of the target
3 multicast media-stream transmission.

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5 **39.** A method as recited in claim 34, wherein the frames of the unicast
6 acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that
7 used by the target multicast media-stream transmission.

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9 **40.** A method as recited in claim 34, wherein the switching occurs
10 before the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target multicast media-
11 stream transmission.

12
13 **41.** A method as recited in claim 34, wherein the switching occurs
14 during or close to the reception of a random-access point (RAP) in the target
15 multicast media-stream transmission.

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17 **42.** A computer comprising one or more processor-readable media
18 having processor-executable instructions that, when executed by the computer,
19 perform the method as recited in claim 34.

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43. A multimedia system comprising:
a receiver configured to receive both a unicast acquisition media-stream transmission and a target multicast media-stream transmission;
a decoding unit configured to decode both a unicast acquisition media-stream transmission and a target multicast media-stream transmission;
a splicing unit configured to splice from the reception of the unicast acquisition media-stream to the reception of the target multicast media-stream transmission

44. A system as recited in claim 43 further comprising a channel-change unit configured to receive an indication to change to a new channel and to request the target multicast media-stream transmission; wherein the transmission is representative of the new channel.

45. A system as recited in claim 43, wherein frame properties of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission match those of the target multicast media-stream transmission.

46. A system as recited in claim 43, wherein frame properties of the unicast acquisition media-stream transmission do not match those of the target multicast media-stream transmission.

1 **47.** A system as recited in claim 43, wherein the frames of the unicast
2 acquisition media-stream transmission are encoded using a lower bit-rate than that
3 used by the target multicast media-stream transmission.
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5 **48.** A system as recited in claim 43, wherein the splicing unit is further
6 configured to perform its splice before the reception of a random-access point
7 (RAP) in the target multicast media-stream transmission.
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9 **49.** A system as recited in claim 43, wherein the splicing unit is further
10 configured to perform its splice during or close to the reception of a random-
11 access point (RAP) in the target multicast media-stream transmission.
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2 **50.** A processor-readable medium having processor-executable
3 instructions that, when executed by a processor, perform a method comprising:
4 receiving a request for transmission of a target multicast media-stream;
5 transmitting a unicast acquisition media-stream over a unicast
6 communications network, where the unicast acquisition media-stream corresponds
7 to the target multicast media-stream.
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9 **51.** A medium as recited in claim 50 further comprising preparing for
10 transmission the unicast acquisition media-stream based upon the same original
11 content of the corresponding target multicast media-stream.
12

13 **52.** A medium as recited in claim 50 further comprising transmitting the
14 requested target multicast media-stream over a multicast communications
15 network.
16

17 **53.** A medium as recited in claim 50, wherein the unicast acquisition
18 media-stream is encoded using a lower bit-rate than its corresponding target
19 multicast media-stream.
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21 **54.** A computing device comprising:
22 a transmitting device for transmitting one or more media-streams via both
23 unicast and multicast communications networks;
24 a medium as recited in claim 50.
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